DYSKOLOS; OR, THE GROUCH

PAN, *a rustic god*

KNEMON, *the grouch*
KNEMON'S DAUGHTER
SIMICHE, *Knemon's old slave-woman*

GORGIAS, *Knemon's stepson*
MYRRHINE, *Gorgias' estranged wife*
DAOS, *Gorgias' slave*

SOSTRATOS, *Kallippides' son*
KALLIPPIDES, *Sostratos' father*
SOSTRATOS' MOTHER
PLANGON, *Sostratos' sister? (mute part)*
GETAS, *Sostratos' family slave*
PYRRHIAS, *Sostratos' family slave*

CHAIREAS, *Sostratos' friend*
DONAX, *a slave (mute part)*
PARTHENIS, *a flute player (mute part)*
SIKON, *a cook*
SYROS, *a slave (mute part)*

CHORUS, *a band of drunken Pan worshipers*

SCENE: Phyle, in the countryside west of Athens. A lane runs across the stage. The exit at stage left is a public road that leads to Cholargos; at stage right are the fields. There are two buildings: at stage left stands the poor, run down home of Gorgias; at stage right the modest but well kept home of Knemon. Between these houses is the cave of Pan and the nymphs.

Enter Pan from the cave.

PAN: Imagine this place is Phyle, part of Attica, and that I came out of the shrine of the nymphs. It belongs to the people of Phyle and to those who are able to till the stones here. It's a very famous holy place. On the farm to my right lives Knemon, a man-shunning man indeed and grouchy to

everyone. He doesn't greet the crowd of people . . . "crowd," did I say? This man's lived a fairly long time and hasn't spoken willingly to anyone, hasn't uttered the first word to anyone except me, Pan, his next-door neighbor. He only does this because he's obligated and he regrets it immediately, I'm sure. But in spite of his temperament, he married a widow, whose former husband had recently died and left behind a son, who was a little boy at the time. Arguing with her not only during the day but most of the night as well made his life miserable. A daughter was born—even worse. When it got so bad that there was no hope for improvement and life became painful and bitter, the woman went back again to the son she'd had earlier. He owns a small piece of land here in the neighborhood that now barely supports his mother, himself, and one faithful family slave. Now he's a fine boy with wisdom beyond his years; experience makes you grow up fast. The old man lives alone with his daughter and an old slave woman carrying wood, digging, always working. From the neighbors and his wife over here all the way to the town of Cholargos down there—he hates everyone without exception. But the girl mirrors her upbringing: there's not a mean bone in her body. Her utmost concern is to be gracious to the nymphs who live with me and to revere them, and so she's inspired in us some concern for her. There's a young man with a very rich father, who farms a plot of land here that's worth a great deal of money. The boy spends his time in the city, but he came out to hunt with a certain sportsman friend. When he chanced upon this place, I took control of him and made him fall in love. That's the long and the short of it. As for the rest, you'll see it if you want. I hope you do. In fact, I think I see that young lover coming here with his sportsman friend, sharing something with each other about this situation.

Exit Pan into the cave.

Enter Sostratos and Chaireas stage right.

CHAIREAS: What are you saying? You saw a freeborn girl from here crowning the nymphs next door, Sostratos, and you fell in love at first sight?

SOSTRATOS: At first sight.

CHAIREAS: That was quick. Or had you planned on falling in love with someone when you left home?

SOSTRATOS: You're making fun of me. Chaireas, I feel terrible.

CHAIREAS: Oh, I don't doubt it.

SOSTRATOS: That's why I've come and brought you in on this business; I

thought you were both a friend and, most important, a man who can deal with any situation.

CHAIREAS: In such matters, Sostratos, this is what I do. One of my friends who's in love with a call-girl asks for my assistance. Straight off I snatch her and carry her away—get drunk, burn down the door—I'm completely deaf to reason. You've got to get her first and ask questions later. "In sloth grows love's raging fire, but quickness leads to quenched desire." Someone mentions marriage and a free girl—I'm a different person then. I look into her family, her assets, her character. That way I've left my friend an eternal monument to my handling of his affair.

SOSTRATOS: Very good! *(aside)* But I don't like it at all.

CHAIREAS: And in this situation we have to hear the facts first.

SOSTRATOS: At dawn I sent Pyrrhias, my hunting companion, from home . . .

CHAIREAS: To whom?

SOSTRATOS: To meet the girl's father himself or the head of the family, whoever he is.

CHAIREAS: Herakles! What are you saying?!

SOSTRATOS: I made a mistake. Maybe it wasn't a job for a slave. But it isn't easy to know what's best when you're in love. I wonder what's taking Pyrrhias so long. I told him to come home right after he got the information for me.

Enter Pyrrhias stage left.

PYRRHIAS: Gangway! Watch out! Everybody get out of the way! He's crazy . . . the man who's chasing me . . . he's crazy!

SOSTRATOS: What's going on, boy?

PYRRHIAS: Run for your lives!

SOSTRATOS: What is it?

PYRRHIAS: I'm getting hit with dirt-clods . . . with rocks! I'm done for!

SOSTRATOS: You're getting hit? Where are you going, you maniac?

PYRRHIAS: Maybe he's not chasing me anymore.

SOSTRATOS: No, by Zeus.

PYRRHIAS: But I thought he was.

SOSTRATOS: What are you talking about?

PYRRHIAS: Let's get out of here. I'm begging you!

SOSTRATOS: And go where?

PYRRHIAS: As far away from that door as possible! You sent me to the son of Pain or somebody possessed by demons or a lunatic who lives in that

house. Oh, this is big trouble! I've stubbed and broken almost every one of my toes!

SOSTRATOS: Oh, Herakles! What's he done, coming here and pulling some drunken trick?

CHAIREAS: He's out of his mind. Anybody can see that.

PYRRHIAS: By Zeus, Sostratos, I'd rather be utterly exterminated! Keep a lookout just the same. . . . But I can't talk. . . . I can't catch my breath. . . . I knocked on the door of his house and said I was looking for the master. Some old woman answered the door, stood as far from me as you are now, and pointed him out up on the hill there, going around his damn pears or gathering up a back-breaking heap of gallows wood.

CHAIREAS: Such anger! What's wrong, my good man?

PYRRHIAS: I stepped onto his land and walked toward him. When I was still some distance from him—I wanted to be friendly and tactful—I spoke to him: "I've come about something, sir," I say, "to see you about something, to promote some business that's to your benefit." But he shoots back, "You heathen, you're on my land! What's the idea?" He picks up a dirt-clod and heaves it right into my face!

CHAIREAS: Go to hell!

PYRRHIAS: While I shut my eyes and said, "Poseidon damn you," he picks up a stake again. He kept beating me with it while he said, "What's your business with me? Don't you know where the public road is?" He was shouting at the top of his lungs.

CHAIREAS: You're talking as though this farmer's a perfect madman!

PYRRHIAS: Here's how it ended. I ran and he chased me maybe two miles—first around the hill then right down into this woods, all the while throwing dirt-clods, rocks, even pears when he ran out of everything else. A savage piece of work, an absolute heathen, that farmer. I'm begging you, get out of here!

SOSTRATOS: You're talking like a coward.

PYRRHIAS: You don't understand the trouble we're in. He'll eat us alive!

CHAIREAS: Perhaps he was upset about something just now. That's why I think we should put off seeing him, Sostratos. You know perfectly well that proper timing is most efficacious in every matter.

PYRRHIAS: Think about it.

CHAIREAS: A poor farmer is a caustic type . . . not just this one, almost all of them. But tomorrow morning I'll go to him alone, since I know where he lives. Now you go home too and wait. It'll be alright.

PYRRHIAS: Let's do that.

Exit Chaireas stage right.

SOSTRATOS: He's happy to have found an excuse. It was clear from the beginning that he wasn't overjoyed to come with me and didn't think much of my plan to marry. *(to Pyrrhias)* As for you, may all the gods destroy you, you fool!

PYRRHIAS: What did I do wrong, Sostratos?

SOSTRATOS: It's obvious that you tore up his land or stole something.

PYRRHIAS: I stole something?

SOSTRATOS: You mean to tell me that someone lashed out at you when you did nothing wrong?

PYRRHIAS: Yes, and here he is! *(to Knemon)* I'm leaving, sir. *(to Sostratos)* You talk to him!

Exit Pyrrhias stage right.

Enter Knemon stage left.

SOSTRATOS: I couldn't. I never get anywhere when I start talking. How would you describe a man like that? He doesn't look to me like a very charitable sort, by Zeus. He's definitely got his mind on something. I'll move away from his door a little. That's better. He's walking by himself, but he's yelling. Looks to me like he's out of his mind. By Apollo and the gods, he scares me! Why shouldn't I be honest?

KNEMON: *(to the audience)* Well, wasn't Perseus lucky, and for two reasons at that: because he had wings so he didn't meet up with any of those pedestrians on the ground and because he had something that turned everybody who pestered him into stone! I wish I had one now. Then there'd be no shortage of statues anywhere! But now life's unbearable, by Asclepius. They come onto my land . . . and talk! Oh sure, I'm in the habit, by Zeus, of wasting my time on the side of this road. I don't even work this piece of land! I've abandoned it because of all the traffic! Now they're chasing me up to the hilltops. The immeasurably immense crowd! *(sees Sostratos)* Oh, no, not again! Somebody's at our door!

SOSTRATOS: *(aside)* Is he going to hit me?

KNEMON: A man can't be alone anywhere, even if he's of a mind to hang himself!

SOSTRATOS: *(aside)* Is it me he's angry with? *(to Knemon)* Sir, I'm waiting here for somebody. I made an appointment.

KNEMON: Didn't I tell you? Do you people think this is a thoroughfare or a public park? If you want to see somebody, arrange to meet him in my doorway. Better yet, build a bench, if you like. No, no . . . a town hall! *(to himself)* Ah, me! Malicious interference . . . that's the problem in my opinion!

Exit Knemon into his house.

SOSTRATOS: It seems that this is going to take more effort than you'd think. No doubt about it. Maybe I'll go to Getas, my father's slave. Yes, by the gods, that's what I'll do! He's a spirited sort with experience in all kinds of things. He'll purge the bile out of him, I know it. I've made up my mind not to waste any time in this matter. A lot can happen in one day. Someone's opening the door!

Enter Knemon's daughter from Knemon's house.

KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: Oh, no. I'm in trouble now. What'll I do? While the nurse was hauling up the bucket, she dropped it in the well!

SOSTRATOS: *(aside)* Father Zeus and Phoebus the Healer and beloved Dioscuroi, what irresistible beauty!

KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: When Daddy came inside, he told me to heat up some water.

SOSTRATOS: *(aside)* Audience, she's a vision!

KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: If he finds out about this, he'll beat her to within an inch of her life! I don't have time to stand around babbling. Dearest nymphs, I'll have to get the water from you. I'd be ashamed to barge in if there's a sacrifice going on in there.

SOSTRATOS: If you give me the water jar, I'll dip it in and bring it right back to you.

KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: By the gods, yes! But hurry!

SOSTRATOS: *(aside)* She's so refined for a country girl. Honored gods, which of you could save me?

Exit Sostratos into the cave.

KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: Oh, no! I'm done for! Who made that noise? Is Daddy coming? I'll get a spanking if he catches me outside!

Exit Knemon's daughter into the cave.

Enter Daos from Gorgias' house.

DAOS: *(shouting back to Gorgias' mother in the house)* I've wasted plenty of time

serving you here while he's been digging all alone. I have to go to him. O Poverty, the most destructive goddess of all, why are we so poor? Why have you squatted in our house for such a long time without a break?

Enter Sostratos and Knemon's daughter from the cave.

SOSTRATOS: Take it.
KNEMON'S DAUGHTER: Bring it over here.
DAOS: *(aside)* What does that guy want?
SOSTRATOS: Goodbye. And take care of your father.

Exit Knemon's daughter into Knemon's house.

Oh, I'm miserable! Stop whining, Sostratos. It'll all work out.
DAOS: *(aside)* What will work out?
SOSTRATOS: Don't panic. Do what you were going to do just now. Get Getas, bring him back, and explain the whole thing to him clearly.

Exit Sostratos stage right.

DAOS: Something bad is happening . . . what is it? I don't like this at all. A young man is serving a girl. Nothing good can come of that. As for you, Knemon, you bastard . . . may all the gods blast you! You let an innocent girl go out alone in an isolated place without giving her the proper protection. Maybe this man found out about it and sneaked up here, thinking it was his lucky day. No doubt about it; I have to tell her brother as quickly as I can so we can keep an eye on the girl. I'd better go and do it now. I see some people coming this way—some Pan worshipers—and they're a little drunk. I don't think this is a good time to get in their way.

Exit Daos stage left.

The Chorus of Pan worshipers enters for a musical interlude.
After the Chorus exits, Gorgias and Daos enter stage left in midconversation on the way to Knemon's house.

GORGIAS: But tell me, did you really treat this matter indifferently and trivially?
DAOS: What do you mean?
GORGIAS: By Zeus, you should have seen the man who approached the girl, Daos, whoever he was, right away and told him that, from now on, no one will see him doing that again. But instead you stayed out of it as if it were none of your business. In my opinion, you can't escape family ties, Daos.

My sister is my responsibility. Her father doesn't want anything to do with us. We shouldn't copy his sour attitude. If she's disgraced, so am I. Outsiders don't know who is to blame; they just know what happened. Let's knock.

DAOS: But sir . . . Gorgias, I'm afraid of the old man. If he catches me coming up to his door, he'll hang me on the spot!

GORGIAS: Yes. If you struggle with him, he won't budge. There's no way that anyone will force him to improve or change his ways by giving him advice [like a friend].[1] Against force he has the law, against persuasion . . . his disposition.

Enter Sostratos stage right.

DAOS: Wait a minute. We didn't come here for nothing. Didn't I tell you? He's coming back again.

GORGIAS: The one with the expensive cloak? He's the one you're talking about?

DAOS: He's the one.

GORGIAS: He's up to no good. You can tell straight off by the look in his eyes.

SOSTRATOS: I found out that Getas wasn't in the house and that my mother was going to sacrifice to some god; I don't know which one. She does this every day—goes around the whole town sacrificing. She sent Getas out to hire some cook from around here. I said "so long" to that sacrifice and came back here again. I think the best plan is to stop this wandering around and speak for myself. I'll knock on the door. That will put an end to this constant waffling.

GORGIAS: Young man, would you be willing to listen to some rather serious advice from me?

SOSTRATOS: Yes, gladly. Go ahead.

GORGIAS: There exists, I believe, for all human beings—both the successes and the ones having a difficult time—a limit and a change to their lot in life. For the fortunate man, his prosperous life continues to flourish only so long as he can accept his good fortune without doing anything unjust. But when his wealth induces him to do wrong, then there is a change for the worse. But for those who are needy, if they do nothing evil while they are in dire straits and bear their fate bravely, then in time they gain credit and expect their lot to improve. So what am I saying? If you are very rich,

1. Brackets indicate that part of the papyrus is lost and that a conjectural restoration has been made by the translator.

don't rely on it and don't look down your nose at those of us stricken by poverty. Show the public that you deserve your good luck to continue.

SOSTRATOS: Do you think I'm doing something now that's out of place?

GORGIAS: You seem to me to have set your mind on a disgraceful act. You intend to persuade a freeborn girl to make a terrible mistake, or you're looking for a chance to accomplish something worthy of death many times over.

SOSTRATOS: Apollo!

GORGIAS: Well, it isn't right for your leisure to cause trouble for those of us who are leisureless. Mark my words: when a poor man's been wronged, he's the bitterest man of all. First he's pitiful, then he takes all that he's suffered not as an injustice, but as a personal insult!

SOSTRATOS: Young man, please, listen to me for a minute.

DAOS: Well said, master. Bless you!

SOSTRATOS: You're speaking before you know the whole story. I saw a girl here. I love her. If you call this an injustice, maybe I'm unjust. What's left to say except that I haven't come here to meet her—I want to see her father. I'm freeborn, wealthy enough, ready to marry her without a dowry and to swear an oath to love her forever. If I've come here for some evil purpose or intend to accomplish some evil plan behind your backs, young man, may this Pan and the nymphs strike me down now, right here by the house. Mark my words, I'm upset . . . very upset . . . if I appear to you to be that kind of person.

GORGIAS: Well, if I spoke more forcefully than necessary, don't let it bother you any longer. You've changed my mind about this and you have me on your side, too. I'm telling you this, my friend, not as an impartial observer, but as the girl's half-brother.

SOSTRATOS: By Zeus, you'll be useful to me with what comes next!

GORGIAS: What do you mean by "useful"?

SOSTRATOS: I see that you're a man of good character . . .

GORGIAS: I don't want to send you off with some lame excuse but to make it perfectly clear how things stand. Her father is like no man, dead or alive.

SOSTRATOS: He's difficult. I know that well enough.

GORGIAS: He's the epitome of trouble! His farm is worth a good deal of money. He works it all by himself without a single man to help him—not a family slave, not a hired man from the neighborhood, not a neighbor—he does it all by himself. His greatest pleasure is to see no one at all. Usually he works with his daughter at his side. He talks to her alone. He'd find

it difficult to do that with anyone else. He says that he'll marry her off when he finds a groom with a personality identical to his own.

SOSTRATOS: That'll be never!

GORGIAS: Don't cause trouble for yourself, friend, because you'll be wasting your time. Let those of us who are his relatives bear this burden. It's our fate.

SOSTRATOS: By the gods, young man, haven't you ever been in love?

GORGIAS: That's not an option for me, friend.

SOSTRATOS: Why? Who's stopping you?

GORGIAS: Keeping track of my problems leaves no time at all for diversions.

SOSTRATOS: It's obvious to me that you haven't been in love. Even the way you talk about it is so naive. You urge me to give up. That's no longer in my hands, but in the hands of the god.

GORGIAS: So then you're not wronging us, just torturing yourself pointlessly.

SOSTRATOS: Not if I get the girl!

GORGIAS: You won't get her. [I'll prove it to you.] Follow me. Her father works in the valley near us.

SOSTRATOS: How will you prove it?

GORGIAS: I'll mention something about the marriage of his daughter. Personally, I'd be happy to see such a thing happen. Straight off he'll attack everybody, finding fault with the lives they lead. If he sees you pampered and living a life of leisure, he'll refuse even to look at you.

SOSTRATOS: Is he there now?

GORGIAS: No, by Zeus, but a little later he'll come out on his usual route.

SOSTRATOS: My good friend, are you saying he'll bring the girl with him?

GORGIAS: Maybe, maybe not.

SOSTRATOS: I'm ready to go wherever you say. But I'm begging you—help me out.

GORGIAS: How?

SOSTRATOS: How? Let's go to the field.

DAOS: What? You're going to stand next to us in that expensive cloak while we work?

SOSTRATOS: Why not?

DAOS: Straight off he'll throw those clods of his at you and call you a lazy pest. No, you have to dig with us. If he happens to see this, he might put up with a little conversation—even with you—because he thinks you live the life of a poor farmer.

SOSTRATOS: *(Removes his cloak)* I'm ready to put myself completely under your command. Lead on.

GORGIAS: Why are you forcing yourself to suffer?

DAOS: *(aside)* I want us to work as much as possible today and for him to break his back at the same time. Then he'll stop annoying us and coming around here.

SOSTRATOS: Bring out a mattock.

DAOS: Take mine and go. In the meantime, I'll rebuild the fence. That has to be done, too.

SOSTRATOS: Give it to me. *(to Gorgias)* You've saved my life!

DAOS: I'm going, master. You two follow me there.

Exit Daos stage left.

SOSTRATOS: This is how things stand with me: I must die now in the attempt or get the girl and live.

GORGIAS: If you mean what you say, good luck!

Exit Gorgias stage left.

SOSTRATOS: O much honored gods! Those arguments that you used just now to change my mind—or so you thought—have made me twice as eager to act! If the girl hasn't been brought up around women, doesn't know about life's vices and hasn't been terrified by an aunt or grandmother, but was raised nobly with a rustic, vice-hating father, how is it not a blessing to win her?

But this mattock weighs a ton! It'll kill me! Nevertheless, I must not weaken once I've begun to wear myself out at this.

Exit Sostratos stage left.

Enter Sikon stage right.

SIKON: This sheep's no ordinary beauty . . . damn it to hell! If I pick it up and carry it in the air, it chomps on the olive shoots, eats the leaves on the fig branches, and wrenches itself out of my hands. But if you let it down on the ground, it won't walk. Talk about role reversals: I'm the cook, but I'm being cut to pieces by this sheep while I tug it down the road like a barge. What luck! Here's the cave of the nymphs where we'll sacrifice. Hello, Pan!

Hey, slave! Getas! Why are you so far behind?

Enter Getas stage right.

GETAS: Those damn women tied up a four-donkey load for me to carry!

SIKON: It looks like a big crowd's coming. The number of rugs you're carrying is unbelievable!

GETAS: What [do I do now?]

SIKON: Lean them over here.

GETAS: *(puts down the rugs)* There. If she had a dream about that cave of Pan twenty miles from here, I know we'd head straight over there to sacrifice.

SIKON: Who had a dream?

GETAS: Please, don't bother me.

SIKON: Tell me anyway, Getas. Who had it?

GETAS: My mistress.

SIKON: By the gods, what was it?

GETAS: You're killing me! It seemed that Pan . . .

SIKON: Are you talking about this one?

GETAS: This one.

SIKON: What was he doing?

GETAS: My master, Sostratos . . .

SIKON: A fine young man, indeed!

GETAS: He was putting leg irons on him.

SIKON: Apollo!

GETAS: Then he gave him work clothes and a mattock and ordered him to dig on his neighbor's property.

SIKON: Weird!

GETAS: And that's why we're sacrificing, to make this bad dream have a happy ending.

SIKON: I understand. Pick all this stuff up again and carry it inside. Let's prepare the couches in there and get everything else ready. Nothing must stand in the way of the sacrifice when they get here. I hope everything turns out alright. And stop making faces, you poor put-upon man. I'll give you a proper feeding today.

GETAS: I'm a fan of you and your profession—always have been . . . *(aside)* but I don't believe you for a minute.

Exit Getas and Sikon into the cave.

The Chorus enters for a musical interlude.
Enter Knemon from his house, shouting back to Simiche.

KNEMON: Old woman! Shut the door and don't open it for anyone until I come back here again. That'll be when it's pitch black, I think.

Enter Sostratos' mother, Plangon, and Parthenis stage right.

SOSTRATOS' MOTHER: Plangon, come quickly! We should have finished the sacrifice by now.

KNEMON: What's the meaning of this mischief? A crowd! Damn them to hell!

SOSTRATOS' MOTHER: Parthenis, play the hymn of Pan. They say you shouldn't approach this god in silence.

Enter Getas from the cave.

GETAS: By Zeus, you've arrived safely.

KNEMON: Herakles, how annoying!

GETAS: We've been sitting around waiting for such a long time.

SOSTRATOS' MOTHER: Is everything ready for us?

GETAS: Yes, by Zeus. The sheep is, anyway.

SOSTRATOS' MOTHER: Poor thing, it's almost dead. It can't wait for you to get started. Come inside. Bring the baskets and the holy water. Prepare the sacrificial cakes.

Exit Sostratos' mother, Plangon, and Parthenis into the cave.

GETAS: *(to Knemon)* What are you gawking at, you idiot?

Exit Getas into the cave.

KNEMON: *(to the group as they enter the cave)* To hell with you bastards!

At the very least, they're making me lounge around here. There's no way I could leave my house unattended. As far as I'm concerned, nymphs are always problem neighbors. It's gotten so bad I think I'll have to tear down my house and move away from here.

Look at those thieves sacrifice. They're carrying food baskets and wine jars—it's not for the gods, but for themselves. Incense and sacrificial cakes are holy; the god gets it all when it's put on the fire. But the tail and the spleen go to the gods because they're inedible . . . and they eat the rest!

Old woman, hurry up and open the door. It looks to me like we have to work inside.

Exit Knemon into his house.

Enter Getas from the cave, shouting back inside.

GETAS: You're telling me you forgot the stewpot? You all act like you're sleep-

ing off a hangover! So what'll we do now? We have to go bother the god's neighbors, it seems.

Getas knocks on Knemon's door.

SLAVE!

By the gods, there aren't more worthless slavegirls anywhere, in my opinion.

SLAVES!

The only thing they know how to do is get screwed.

GOOD SLAVES!

And to lie about it if somebody finds out.

SLAVE!

What the hell is going on here?

SLAVES!

Not a single person is inside. Huh? Seems that someone's running toward the door.

Enter Knemon from his house.

KNEMON: Why are you beating on the door, you bastard? Speak up, man!

GETAS: Don't bite me!

KNEMON: By Zeus, I'll eat you alive!

GETAS: No, by the gods!

KNEMON: Do we have business with each other, you heathen?

GETAS: No business. I haven't come here to recover a debt or with witnesses to serve a summons, but to ask for a stewpot.

KNEMON: A stewpot?!

GETAS: A stewpot.

KNEMON: You scum! Do you think I sacrifice cattle and do all those things that you all do?

GETAS: I don't think you'd even sacrifice a snail! Well, goodbye, sir. The women ordered me to knock on your door and ask you. I did it. You don't have one. I'll go and report back to them. *(aside)* Much honored gods, that man's a gray-haired old viper!

Exit Getas into the cave.

KNEMON: Homicidal beasts! They come right up and knock on my door as though I were a friend. If I catch one of them coming toward my door and

don't make an example of him for everyone around here, consider me a nobody! That man doesn't know how lucky he was . . . whoever he was.

Exit Knemon into his house.

Enter Sikon from the cave, shouting back at Getas.

SIKON: Damn you to hell! He yelled at you? Maybe you asked in a demanding tone of voice, you shit-eater. Some people don't know how to go about such things. I've discovered the proper technique. I serve thousands in the city. I bother their neighbors and get equipment from everybody. You have to kiss ass when you need something. Some older fellow answers the knock at the door. Straight off I call him "father" and "dad." An old woman: "mother." If it's a middle-aged woman, I call her "priestess." If a slave, I call him "sir." You all can go hang yourselves. Oh, the stupidity! You all shout for a slave. But I say, "Come out, Daddy, I want you!"

Enter Knemon from his house.

KNEMON: You again?!
SIKON: Oh, boy! What's this?
KNEMON: You're provoking me on purpose. Didn't I tell you to stay away from my door? Give me a strap, old woman!

Knemon grabs Sikon.

SIKON: No way! Let go!
KNEMON: Let go?
SIKON: Yes sir, by the gods!
KNEMON: Come back!

Knemon hits Sikon.

SIKON: May Poseidon . . .
KNEMON: Are you still blabbering?
SIKON: I came to ask you for a pot.
KNEMON: I don't have a pot or an ax or salt or vinegar or anything else. I already told everybody in the neighborhood to stay away from me!
SIKON: You didn't tell me.
KNEMON: Well, I'm telling you now.
SIKON: *(aside)* Yes, and you're going to be sorry! *(to Knemon)* Tell me, couldn't you say where a person could go and get one?

KNEMON: Didn't I tell you? Are you still blabbering to me?
SIKON: A hearty farewell!
KNEMON: I don't want a "farewell" from any of you.
SIKON: Fare badly, then.
KNEMON: Oh, the incurable evils!

Exit Knemon into his house.

SIKON: He really plowed into me! It *is* possible to ask skillfully. It does make a difference, by Zeus. Should I go to somebody else's door? But if they're so ready for boxing practice in this place, it'll be painful. Is it best for me to roast all the meat? It looks like it. I've got a fish pan! Go to hell, people of Phyle—that's what I say. I'll use what I've got.

Exit Sikon into the cave.

Enter Sostratos stage left.

SOSTRATOS: Whoever's free of trouble should come hunting in Phyle. I'm a total wreck: my tailbone, my back, my neck . . . my whole body when you come right down to it!

I threw myself into it straight off with the vigor of a young man. I swung the mattock up with gusto and, just like a workman, I slammed it down deep into the dirt. I pressed on with my mind on the work, but not too long. Then I'd turn around a little to see when the old man would come with the girl. And then, by Zeus, I'd rub my lower back—secretly at first. But when the work went on and on with no end in sight, my spine started to bow. Little by little I became as stiff as a board. No one was coming. The sun was beating down on me. Gorgias looked over and saw my whole body swaying back and forth like a tree in a windstorm. "It doesn't look like he's coming, young man," he said. "So what should we do," I replied, "look for him tomorrow and give up for now?" Daos arrived to take over the digging. Such was our first attempt. So I've come here . . . why, I can't say, by the gods. But this situation I'm in seems to draw me back here on its own.

Enter Getas from the cave, shouting back into it.

GETAS: What the hell? Do you think I've got sixty hands? I fire up the charcoal, I take the guts from you, I carry them off, I clean them, I cut them up. I knead the dough, I get the pots ready. I've been completely blinded by smoke. A fine holiday this is!

SOSTRATOS: Getas!

GETAS: Who's calling me?

SOSTRATOS: I am.

GETAS: And who are you?

SOSTRATOS: Don't you see me?

GETAS: I see. It's my master.

SOSTRATOS: What are you doing here? Tell me.

GETAS: What am I doing? We've just sacrificed and we're getting lunch ready for all of you.

SOSTRATOS: Is mother here?

GETAS: For a long time.

SOSTRATOS: And father?

GETAS: We're expecting him. But come on inside.

SOSTRATOS: After I've run an errand. In a way, the sacrifice in there hasn't come at a bad time. I'll invite that young man right away and his servant, too. After they've shared the offerings, they'll be more useful allies later on for the marriage.

GETAS: What are you saying? You're going to go and invite somebody to lunch? Make it three thousand as far as I'm concerned! I've known for a long time that I'm not going to get so much as a taste. How could I? Bring them all here. You've sacrificed a beautiful animal, a fine thing to see. But these females . . . oh, sure, they're polite, but would they give me anything? By Demeter, they wouldn't even give me a pinch of bitter salt!

SOSTRATOS: All will go well today, Getas. I predict it myself, Pan. I always pray to you as I go by . . . and I'll be kind to my fellow man.

Exit Sostratos stage left.

Enter Simiche from Knemon's house.

SIMICHE: Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no!

GETAS: Oh, hell. The old man's woman has come outside.

SIMICHE: What will happen to me? I wanted to haul the bucket out of the well myself, if I could do it somehow without the master knowing about it. I tied the mattock to a weak, rotten piece of rope and it broke on me straight away. Poor me, I've let the mattock drop right into the well along with the bucket.

GETAS: There's one thing left to do: throw yourself in.

SIMICHE: And just my luck, he wants to move some dung piled up inside.

He's been running around for a long time looking for it and shouting and—I hear the door!

GETAS: Run, you pitiful woman, run! He'll kill you, old woman! Better yet, fight him off!

Enter Knemon from his house, holding a rotten piece of rope.

KNEMON: Where's that thieving woman?

SIMICHE: I dropped it in, master, but it was an accident!

KNEMON: Get inside!

SIMICHE: What are you going to do? Tell me!

KNEMON: What am I going to do? I'm going to tie you up and send you down on a rope.

SIMICHE: No, don't! Oh, poor me.

KNEMON: And with this very rope, by the gods!

GETAS: An excellent idea . . . that is, if the rope is completely rotten.

SIMICHE: Shall I call Daos from next door?

KNEMON: You'll call Daos after you've done me in, you heathen? Didn't I tell you? Get inside . . . fast!

Exit Simiche into Knemon's house.

I'm done for, done for, all because of the solitary life I'm now [living]. There's not a single person [to help me]. I'll go down into the well. What else can I do?

GETAS: We'll provide a hook and a rope.

KNEMON: May the gods doubly destroy you if you blabber anything to me.

GETAS: And I'd deserve it, too.

Exit Knemon into his house.

He burst inside again. What a miserable soul this man is. What a life he lives. That's an Attic farmer through and through. He makes war on rocks that produce thyme and sage and wins torment for himself. Nothing good comes of it.

Enter Sostratos, Gorgias, and Daos stage left with their mattocks.

But here comes master with his guests in tow. They're some workers from the neighborhood. Weird. Why is *he* bringing *them* here? Where did he get to know them?

Exit Getas into the cave.

SOSTRATOS: I wouldn't let you do otherwise. We have everything we need. Herakles, who in the world rejects a lunch invitation out of hand from a friend who's made a sacrifice? Have no doubt that I was your friend long before you realized it.

Daos, take these things and put them inside your house, then come on over.

GORGIAS: Don't leave mother home alone. See to whatever she needs. I'll be back soon.

Exit Daos into the house of Gorgias.

Exit Sostratos and Gorgias into the cave.

The Chorus enters for a musical interlude.

Enter Simiche from Knemon's house.

SIMICHE: Somebody help! Oh, poor me. Somebody help!

Enter Sikon from the cave.

SIKON: Lord Herakles! By the gods and spirits, let us make our offerings! You abuse us, you beat us, you . . . go to hell! What a weird house.

SIMICHE: The master is in the well.

SIKON: How?

SIMICHE: How? He was climbing down to drag out the mattock and the bucket, then he slipped on the way down, and now he's fallen.

SIKON: Not that old monster? Well done, by Heaven. Dearest old woman, now it's up to you.

SIMICHE: How?

SIKON: Take a mortar or a rock or some such thing and throw it down the well!

SIMICHE: Dearest man, climb down the well.

SIKON: Poseidon! You want me to fight with that dog in the well? I know how that story ends. No way!

SIMICHE: Gorgias, where in the world are you?

Enter Gorgias from the cave.

GORGIAS: Where in the world am *I*? What is it, Simiche?

SIMICHE: What is it? I'll say it again: the master is in the well.

GORGIAS: Sostratos, come here!

Enter Sostratos from the cave.

(to Simiche) Lead the way. Go inside. Hurry!

Exit Simiche, Sostratos, and Gorgias into the house of Knemon.

SIKON: The gods do exist, by Dionysos! You didn't give a stewpot to the sacrificers, you sacrilegious bastard. No, you refused. You fell into the well, now drink it dry so you won't have water to give to anybody. Now the nymphs have taken vengeance on him for me, and rightly so. Nobody hurts a cook and gets away with it. Our trade is somehow sacred. But as far as waiters go, do whatever you want with them . . .

Surely he hasn't died? Some woman is moaning, crying for daddy dearest. [No, wait! They're cries of joy. Now it's all] clear. [He hasn't died after all. They must be] hauling him up [with a new piece of rope. I can just see it now—] oh, the sight of him! By the gods, can you imagine what a drenched, shivering, [pathetic fool he'll be]? Fabulous! *(speaking to the audience while pointing to a small representation of Apollo in the area)* I'd like to see that, audience, I swear by this Apollo here! *(shouting into the cave)* You, women! Pour an offering on behalf of the rescuers. Pray that the old man's salvation be . . . denied, that he be maimed and lame! Then he'll be the least objectionable neighbor to the god and to those who are always sacrificing here. That's important to me, in case anyone ever hires me.

Exit Sikon into the cave.

Enter Sostratos from Knemon's house.

SOSTRATOS: Oh audience! By Demeter! By Asclepius! By the gods! Never in my life have I seen a man almost get himself drowned at a more convenient time! What a delightful diversion! The minute we got inside, Gorgias jumped straight into the well. But the girl and I stayed up above and did . . . nothing! What did you expect us to do? Well, she tore out her hair, cried, beat her breast ferociously. But I, precious idiot that I was, stood there next to her, by the gods, like some kind of a nanny. I begged her not to do this, I pleaded with her, fixing my eyes on that extraordinary work of art. I couldn't have cared less about that injured man down there, except for constantly having to haul him up! That was really tedious. By Zeus, I almost finished him off on my own! While I was staring at the girl, I let go of the rope . . . maybe three times! But Gorgias wasn't your ordinary At-

las. He held on and finally managed to get him up to the top. As the old man emerged, I came out here. I couldn't hold myself back any longer. I almost went up to the girl and gave her a kiss! That's how madly in love I am. I'm getting ready to—the door is opening! Zeus the Savior, what a weird sight!

Enter Gorgias, Knemon, and Knemon's daughter from Knemon's house; Knemon may have been carried on a stretcherlike bed.

GORGIAS: What do you want, Knemon? Tell me.

KNEMON: What's there to say? I feel terrible.

GORGIAS: Cheer up.

KNEMON: I *have* cheered up. Knemon will no longer be a bother to you in the future.

GORGIAS: Do you see what trouble isolation brings? You came within a hair's breadth of dying just now. At your age, you ought to live out your life with someone to watch over you.

KNEMON: I know I'm in bad shape. But call your mother, Gorgias. It's urgent.

Exit Gorgias into his house.

Only disasters can teach us, it seems. Little daughter, would you hold me and help me stand up?

SOSTRATOS: Lucky man!

KNEMON: Why are you standing over there, you low-life scum?

Enter Gorgias and Myrrhine.

[I think it's time to tell you all about the plan I've made,
about the way I've led my life and how it's going to change.
I used to farm my land alone all day from dawn to dusk.
My fields gave me solitude, a refuge from the crowds.
But now that I'm a broken man, I'm forced to give this up.]
Not one of you could change my mind. You have to let me be.

I made just one mistake: I thought that I could live alone,
that I'm the only man on earth who needed no one else.
But now I know the end of life is swift and unforeseen.
I've come to realize that I was wrong as I could be.
You've got to have someone nearby to lend a helping hand.

Hephaistos! When I watched the way they act, it threw me off.
When profit's all that's on his mind, who'd help his fellow man?
Now that's the thing that held me back. But one man proved me wrong:
that's Gorgias, whose deed revealed innate nobility.
For even though I always kept him far from my front door,
and never helped in any way with matters great or small,
and even though I never spoke a single word to him,
he went ahead and saved my life in spite of all of this.
Now any other man would say (and he'd be right, I'm sure):
"You want to be alone and that's exactly what you'll get.
You've been no help to me, so now I'll be no help to you."

But what's the matter, my young man? For if I die right now
(my present state makes me believe I'll die most miserably)
or if I live, you're my adopted son and legal heir.
So I entrust this girl to you. Her wedding's your concern.
For even if I did get well, she'd never have a mate.
There's not a man alive who'd ever be all I'd require.
But if I live, then let me live the way I want to live.
So you're in charge of everything. The gods gave you good sense.
Your sister's under your control, that's only natural.
Divide my property in two; the dowry should take half,
your mom and I will live off of the other half that's left.

Now, daughter, lay me on the bed. I've made my point. Enough.
But boy, know this—I want to tell you why I am this way.
If all the men on earth would simply take me as their guide,
there'd be no courts, no jail time, no going off to war.
It's moderation, that's the key to happiness for all.
But maybe how things are today is more to modern tastes.
Do what you want. Here's one old cranky grouch out of the way.

GORGIAS:

Well, I accept all that. But now we have to find a groom
as quickly as we can for her. If it's alright with you . . .

KNEMON:

Now look, I told you what I thought. Don't bother me, by god!

GORGIAS:

But someone wants to talk to you . . .

KNEMON:

No chance of that, by god!

GORGIAS:

. . . about the marriage of your girl.

KNEMON:

That's no concern of mine.

GORGIAS:

He helped to save you.

KNEMON:

Who?

GORGIAS:

This man. Come over here.

KNEMON:

He's burned.

A farmer?

GORGIAS:

Father, yes he is. But not the pampered kind.
He's not a shiftless gadabout who strolls around all day.
[What do you think?]

KNEMON:

[It's up to you.] Now wheel me to the house!

Exit Knemon, Myrrhine, and Knemon's daughter into Knemon's house.

GORGIAS:

(to the women as they leave)

Take care of him.

SOSTRATOS:

One thing remains: betroth the girl to me.

GORGIAS:

You're sure your father will approve?

SOSTRATOS:

My father won't say no.

GORGIAS:

Well, in that case, I give her in betrothal before the gods.
Sostratos, she's your just reward. When you began this task,
you didn't hide your character; you opened up to us
and thought this marriage worth whatever it was going to take.
You lived in luxury, but took a mattock, dug, and worked.

A rich man, when he acts like he's no better than the poor,
he shows his worth and bears the twists of fate with self-control.
You've given ample proof of this. I hope you never change.

SOSTRATOS:

That's just the start for me! But bragging's such an awful bore.

Enter Kallippides stage right.

I see my father coming here. What luck!

GORGIAS:

Kallippides?

That man's your father?

SOSTRATOS:

Yes indeed!

GORGIAS:

By Zeus, he's very rich.

And rightly so, since he's a farmer without equal here.

KALLIPPIDES:

Perhaps I've missed the lunch. By now they've eaten up the sheep
and gone back to the farm.

GORGIAS:

Poseidon, he looks like he's starved!

Well, should we tell him right away?

SOSTRATOS:

First let him have his lunch.

Then he'll be easier to manage.

KALLIPPIDES:

Hey, what's all of this?

Sostratos, have you eaten lunch?

SOSTRATOS:

But some is left for you.

So go ahead inside.

KALLIPPIDES:

Well, that's exactly what I'll do.

GORGIAS:

Now you go in and talk to him alone, if that's your plan.

SOSTRATOS:

And you'll wait in the house, won't you?

GORGIAS:

I won't set foot outside.

SOSTRATOS:

In just a little while I'll call for you to come out here.

Exit Sostratos into the cave and Gorgias into his house.

The Chorus enters for a musical interlude.

Enter Sostratos and Kallippides from the cave.

SOSTRATOS: You aren't doing everything as I wanted, Father, nor as I expected from you.

KALLIPPIDES: What? Didn't I give my consent? I want you to have the girl you love and I say that you must.

SOSTRATOS: That's not how it seems to me.

KALLIPPIDES: Yes it is, by the gods. I know that a young man's marriage is sound if he's persuaded to enter into it out of love.

SOSTRATOS: Then I'll marry the young man's sister, knowing that he's worthy of us. But how can you go on to say that you won't give my sister to him in return?

KALLIPPIDES: Are you saying that this is something shameful? I don't want to get an indigent bride and bridegroom all at the same time. One of the two is enough for me.

SOSTRATOS: You're talking about money, something that's not secure. If you know that it'll stay with you forever, guard it, don't share what you have with anyone. But you don't have control over it. Everything you have isn't yours; it belongs to Chance. Don't begrudge any of it to someone else, Father. For luck may take everything away from you again and give it to another man, maybe someone who doesn't deserve it. So I say that as long as you have control over it, you must use it nobly, Father, that you must help everyone, that you must make as many as possible rich by your efforts. This is a thing that remains forever. And if you happen to stumble in the future, it will bring the same treatment back to you again. "A visible friend revealed is much better than hidden wealth you keep buried in the ground."

KALLIPPIDES: You know what kind of a man I am, Sostratos. I won't bury in my grave what I've accumulated. How could I? It's yours. You want to keep a good friend whose worth you've tested. Go ahead, and good luck to you. Why are you quoting proverbs to me? Off with you! Give it, share it. You've persuaded me completely.

SOSTRATOS: You agree?

KALLIPPIDES: I agree, rest assured. Don't let it worry you.

SOSTRATOS: Then I'll call Gorgias.

Enter Gorgias from Knemon's house.

GORGIAS: I heard your entire conversation as I was coming outside. Well, now. I admit that you, Sostratos, are an excellent friend and I'm extremely fond of you, but I don't want any part in something above my station nor, by Zeus, would I be able to handle it if I did want it.

SOSTRATOS: I don't understand what you're saying.

GORGIAS: I give you my sister as your wife, but to take your sister—no thank you.

SOSTRATOS: No thank you?

GORGIAS: It leaves a bad taste in my mouth to live in luxury off other people's work. I make my own way.

SOSTRATOS: You're talking nonsense, Gorgias. Do you think that you're not worthy of this marriage?

GORGIAS: I've decided that I'm worthy of the girl, but not worthy of receiving so much when I have so little.

KALLIPPIDES: By Zeus the Greatest, you act nobly but you're [being unreasonable].

GORGIAS: How?

KALLIPPIDES: You're poor, but don't wish to seem so. Since you've seen me convinced, [you should give in, too.]

GORGIAS: That's convinced me. I'd be doubly deficient—both in money and in intelligence—[if I were to refuse the man who] can help me out of my troubles.

SOSTRATOS: [Excellent!] All that's left is the engagement.

KALLIPPIDES: Well, I now betroth to you my daughter, young man, for the purpose of sowing legitimate children, and I give to you a dowry of three talents for her.

GORGIAS: And I have one talent for the dowry of the other girl.

KALLIPPIDES: You have? Don't give too much.

GORGIAS: But I have the land.

KALLIPPIDES: You keep all of it, Gorgias. Now bring your mother and your sister out to be with our ladies.

GORGIAS: I'll do that.

SOSTRATOS: We'll all stay [at the cave of Pan] tonight [and tomorrow] we'll have the wedding. And you all bring the old man here, Gorgias. Maybe he'll get better treatment here with us.

GORGIAS: He won't want to come, Sostratos.

SOSTRATOS: Persuade him.

GORGIAS: If I can.

Exit Gorgias into Knemon's house.

SOSTRATOS: We have to have a good drinking party now, Dad, and the women have to stay up all night.

KALLIPPIDES: The other way around, I'm sure. They'll do the drinking and we'll be kept up all night! I'll go now and make some of the preparations for you.

SOSTRATOS: You do that.

Exit Kallippides into the cave.

The man who thinks clearly should never despair completely about any undertaking. All things are attainable through concentration and effort. I now offer myself as an example of this. In one day I've achieved a marriage that no one in the world would have thought at all possible.

Enter Gorgias from Knemon's house.

GORGIAS: *(calling to his mother and Knemon's daughter inside the house)* Come on now. Quickly!

SOSTRATOS: Right this way. *(leads them to the cave and calls inside)* Mother, take charge of these ladies. *(to Gorgias)* Knemon isn't here yet?

GORGIAS: Why, he begged me to bring the old woman out too so that he'd finally be all alone.

SOSTRATOS: He just won't give an inch.

GORGIAS: That's how he is.

SOSTRATOS: Oh well, so long to him! Let's go.

GORGIAS: Sostratos, I'm embarrassed to be with women in the same . . .

SOSTRATOS: What is this nonsense? Why don't you go on in? You have to think of all of them as part of the family now.

Exit Sostratos and Gorgias into the cave.

Enter Simiche from Knemon's house.

SIMICHE: *(to Knemon inside the house)* I'm leaving too, by Artemis! You'll lie there all alone. It's too bad for you that you're like that. By god, they wanted to take you, but you refused. There's something terrible in store for you, by the goddesses, much worse than what's happened now. *(praying)* [I hope everything goes] well!

Enter Getas from the cave.

GETAS: *(calling into the cave)* I'll come out here and see how he's doing.

The manuscript indicates that a flute player begins playing.

Why blow that flute at me, you bum?
I've got no time for such things now.
They've sent me to the cripple. Stop!

SIMICHE:
(calling into the cave)

And one of you can go inside
and sit yourself down next to him.
I want to chat with mistress now,
to send her off, to say goodbye,
to give her one last warm embrace.

GETAS:

A good idea. Now you go in
and I will see to him myself.

Exit Simiche into the cave.

[Well, I've been looking] for a chance
like this for quite a while now,
but [I've been working like a slave].
[So I'll just peep inside the door
and see that he's in bed. That's great!
I'd just begun to fear that I'd
be robbed of my revenge. But no!
I think I need some help.] Hey cook!
Come over here, Sikon. Be quick!
Poseidon, what a chance for fun!

Enter Sikon from the cave.

SIKON:
You're calling me?
GETAS:
That's right. I am.
You want to get revenge for when
he shoved you out behind . . .
SIKON:
For what
he shoved in my behind? You lie!
It's you who'd suck a cock, not me!
GETAS:
The grouchy geezer sleeps alone.
SIKON:
And how's he doing?
GETAS:
Not dead yet.
SIKON:
He couldn't stand and swing at us?
GETAS:
He can't stand up, I'm pretty sure.
SIKON:
How sweet it is! And now I'll go
inside and ask him for some things
and he'll go absolutely nuts!
GETAS:
Heh, you know what? Let's roll him out.
We'll put him here and beat the door,
then ask for things and watch him burn.
Oh, what a pleasure that will be!
SIKON:
But I'm afraid that Gorgias
might catch us. Then he'd tan our hides.
GETAS:
It's loud and they're all drinking wine.
No one will hear, I'm sure of that.
Now it's completely up to us
to see that he gets civilized.
He's our relation, one of us.

If he's like this forever, then
we'll have our work cut out for us.
And you know that as well as I.

SIKON:

Well just be careful no one sees
you when you bring him out in front.

GETAS:

Go on.

SIKON:

Now just a minute, please!
Make sure you don't run off and leave
me here.

GETAS:

Don't make a sound, by god!

SIKON:

But I'm not making noise, by Earth!

Enter Getas and Sikon into Knemon's house, then they return to the stage carrying the sleeping Knemon, probably on a bed.

GETAS:

To the right!

SIKON:

There!

GETAS:

Put him here. It's time!

SIKON:

Alright.
(to the flute player)
I'll start, you keep the rhythm.
(beating on the door in rhythm)
Oh slave! Little slave! My dear, good slaves!
Slave! Little slave!

KNEMON:

I'm done for! Oh, no!

SIKON:

(knocking in rhythm)
Oh slave! Little slave! My dear, good slaves!
Slave! Little slave!

KNEMON:

I'm done for! Oh, no!

SIKON:

And who is this? Are you from here?

KNEMON:

That's obvious. What do you want?

SIKON:

I want a kettle and a pot.

KNEMON:

Will someone get me on my feet?!

SIKON:

You've got them. Yes, you do. It's true!
And tripods—seven; tables—twelve.
Well, slaves, go tell the staff inside.
Come on! I'm in a hurry now.

KNEMON:

But I've got none!

SIKON:

But you've got none?

KNEMON:

You've heard it said a thousand times!

SIKON:

Then I'll be on my way again.

Sikon moves to the background.

KNEMON:

Poor me! How did I get outside?
Who put me out in front?

Getas approaches Knemon.

Away!

GETAS:

And now . . .
(beating on the door)
O slave! Little slave! O women!
O men! O doorman!

KNEMON:

You're insane!
You'll beat my door to pieces, man!

GETAS:

Please [lend] us nine rugs—fancy ones.

KNEMON:

Impossible!

GETAS:

And [could you lend]
an oriental tapestry,
about a hundred feet in length?

KNEMON:

I wish I had a [strap] right now.
Old woman! Where's that woman now?

GETAS:

Should I go to another door?

KNEMON:

Away!
Old woman! Simiche!
May all the gods destroy you, scum!

Getas moves to the background as Sikon approaches Knemon.

What do you want?

SIKON:

I'd like to get
a big bronze mixing bowl for wine.

KNEMON:

Could someone get me on my feet?!

Getas joins Sikon.

GETAS:

You've got them. Yes, you do. It's true!
The tapestry, Dad . . . Daddy.

KNEMON:

No!
[Look, I don't have a rug, by Zeus],
and I don't have a mixing bowl.
I'll kill that Simiche, I will!

SIKON:

Sit down and stop your grumbling.
You flee the crowd, you hate the girls,

you don't allow yourself to go
inside when there's a sacrifice.
You'll have to take what we dish out.
You'll get no help. Just bite your lip
and hear [what happened in the cave.]

Kallippides came in and said
we'd have two weddings, not just one.
Then everyone was filled with joy.
And then] your daughter and your wife
were met with hugs—and kisses, too.
A pleasant time was had by all.
And I was not too far away
preparing for the men's soirée.
The men. . . . Hey, listen! Don't you sleep!

GETAS:

No, don't you dare!

KNEMON:

My god!

SIKON:

[What's wrong?]
But don't you want to be with them?
Now listen to the rest of it.

We hurried to prepare the feast.
I spread the rug out on the ground,
I put the food out on the tables—
well, that's my job. You listening?
Remember, I'm a cook.

GETAS:

A fag!

SIKON:

Then with his hands one man poured out
some old gray Bacchus in a jar,
and mixed it with the Naiads' spring.
He toasted all the men and then
a toast went to the women folk.
That's pouring water on the sand.

Know what I mean? And then a girl,
her face hid by the shade of her hair,
got tipsy from the wine and stepped
into the rhythm modestly—
now hesitating, trembling.
Another took her hand and danced.

GETAS:

You've suffered much.
Get on your feet!
Come, dance with us! We'll help you out.

KNEMON:

What do you want, you low-life scum?

GETAS:

Come on and try. Get on your feet!
We'll help you out.

Knemon attempts to dance.

You're such a hick!

KNEMON:

By all the gods, don't do that! Please!

GETAS:

Well, should we take you in the cave?

KNEMON:

Now what am I to do?

GETAS:

You'll dance!

KNEMON:

Then help me in the cave. Perhaps
What's going on in there's no worse.

GETAS:

A wise decision, too.
(to Sikon)
We've won!
A glorious triumph! Slave! Donax!

Enter Donax from the cave.

You too, Sikon. Pick him up and carry him inside. *(to Knemon)* You watch out. If we catch you causing trouble again, you can be sure that you won't

get off so easily next time. *(calling into the cave)* Hey! Somebody bring out garlands for us and a torch. *(giving them to Knemon)* Take this.

Exit Knemon, Sikon, and Donax into the cave.

Well, if you've enjoyed our victory over this troublesome old man, give us your kind applause—youths, boys, and men. May that daughter of a noble father, the laughter-loving virgin goddess Nike, be well disposed to us forever.

Exit Getas into the cave.